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Borough of Okehampton

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health

FOR THE

YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER, 1966

PUBLIC HEALTH AND HOUSING COMMITTEES

The following members of the Council served on the Public Health and the Housing Committees during the year:

Housing Committee

Chairman

COUNCILLOR W. T. LETCHFORD

Vice-Chairman

COUNCILLOR R. R. TAYLOR

Members

ALDERMAN W. W. J. CORNISH

ALDERMAN H. R. HORNE

ALDERMAN A. W. RICHMOND

COUNCILLOR M. J. CUNLIFFE

COUNCILLOR C. G. JONES

COUNCILLOR I. V. KENNARD

COUNCILLOR F. A. PARTRIDGE

COUNCILLOR E. H. RAE

COUNCILLOR P. N. SMART

COUNCILLOR C. E. W. WHITE

Public Health Committee

Chairman

COUNCILLOR A. J. CROCKER

Vice-Chairman

COUNCILLOR R. GEE

Members

COUNCILLOR J. F. HAYHURST

COUNCILLOR C. G. JONES

COUNCILLOR I. V. KENNARD

COUNCILLOR W. T. LETCHFORD

COUNCILLOR E. H. RAE

COUNCILLOR C. E. W. WHITE

PUBLIC HEALTH STAFF

Medical Officer of Health

E. D. ALLEN-PRICE, M.D., CH.B., D.P.H. (deceased 5.2.66)

MARY E. BUDDING, M.B., B.CH., B.SC., D.P.H. (temporary from 1.10.66)

Borough Surveyor and Public Health Inspector

T. F. BENNETT, M.A.P.H.I., A.I.P.H.E.

Assistants to Borough Surveyor

E. J. N. FURSE

N. F. WESTON

Clerk to Medical Officer of Health

MISS E. M. HAMBLY (part-time from 1.10.66)

Mr. Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors,

A tribute was paid in the Annual Report for 1965 to the late Dr. E. D. Allen-Price, who died after a long illness early in the year 1966. As the Clerk to the Medical Officer had resigned half-way through 1965, a rather difficult situation arose, when I was asked to 'give cover' in February 1966. However, with the very willing and able assistance of Mr. Bennett and the understanding and forbearance of the Council, I have been able, I hope, to fulfil my duties to you. The appointment of a part-time Clerk in October 1966 was of immense value.

I would draw your attention to one item in the Report in particular, i.e. the remarkable improvement shown in the T.B. Register (Section 'F') as compared with only ten years ago. This reduction in incidence is due to better conditions, B.C.G. vaccination, modern drugs used in treatment, and early diagnosis.

I now beg to submit my Annual Report for year ended 31st December, 1966, in accordance with the instructions of the Ministry of Health.

SECTION 'A'

General Statistics

Area (statute acres)	786
Population – 1951 census	3,899
Population – 1961 census	3,864
Estimated home population – mid 1966	3,810
Number of inhabited dwellings	1,345
Rateable value	£114,262
Product of the Penny Rate	£461
Loan debt	£263,952

Vital Statistics

	<i>Mate</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
LIVE BIRTHS			
Legitimate	24	33	57
Illegitimate	1	2	3
			—
			60
			—
DEATHS	30	43	73

		<i>England and Wales</i>
LIVE BIRTHS		
Number	60	
Rate per 1,000 population	15.7	17.7
Corrected Birth Rate	17.8	
ILLEGITIMATE LIVE BIRTHS		
(per cent of total live births)	5%	
STILL BIRTHS		
Number	Nil	
Rate per 1,000 total live and still births	—	15.4
TOTAL LIVE AND STILL BIRTHS	60	
INFANT DEATHS (deaths under 1 year)	1	
INFANT MORTALITY RATES		
Total infant deaths per 1,000 total live births	16.7	19.0
Legitimate infant deaths per 1,000 legitimate live births	17.5	
Illegitimate infant deaths per 1,000 illegitimate live births	—	

NEONATAL MORTALITY RATES

(deaths under 4 weeks per 1,000 total live births)	16.7	12.9
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EARLY NEONATAL MORTALITY RATES

(deaths under 1 week per 1,000 total live births)	16.7	11.1
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PERINATAL MORTALITY RATE

(still births and deaths under 1 week per 1,000 total live and still births) ...	16.7	26.3
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MATERNAL MORTALITY (including abortion)

Number of deaths	Nil	
Rate per 1,000 total live and still births	—	

DEATHS

Number of deaths	73	
Crude death rate per 1,000 population ...	19.2	11.7
Corrected death rate	11.7	

POPULATION

<i>Year</i>	<i>Mid-Year Population</i>				<i>Birth Rate</i>	<i>Death Rate</i>
1962	3,800				12.1	21.3
1963	3,800				11.0	19.4
1964	3,840				16.4	23.5
1965	3,840				14.3	21.4
1966	3,810				15.7	19.2

The chief causes of death were as follows:

Cancer ... ..	...	...	15
Vascular Lesions of the Nervous System ...	...	...	12
Coronary Diseases ... ..	...	...	7
Other Heart Diseases ... ..	...	...	16
Other Circulatory Diseases ... ..	...	...	3
Pneumonia ... ..	...	...	6
Bronchitis ... ..	...	...	3
Other Diseases of the Respiratory System	...	...	3
Other Ill-defined Diseases ... ..	...	...	5
Motor Vehicle Accidents ... ..	...	...	1
Suicide ... ..	...	...	2

AGE AT DEATH TABLE

<i>Age</i>				<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
Under 4 weeks ... ..	...	...	...	—	1
4 weeks and under 1 year ... ..	...	...	...	—	—
1 — ... ..	...	...	...	—	—
5 — ... ..	...	...	...	—	—
15 — ... ..	...	...	...	—	—
25 — ... ..	...	...	...	—	—
35 — ... ..	...	...	...	—	—
45 — ... ..	...	...	...	1	1
55 — ... ..	...	...	...	8	3
65 — ... ..	...	...	...	7	8
75 and over ... ..	...	...	...	14	30

SECTION 'B'

GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES

Ambulances

The St. John Ambulance Brigade, under delegated powers from the local health authority, provide a twenty-four-hour cover for the district as a whole.

Mass Radiography Unit

The Unit continues to visit regularly for one hour fortnightly, on Friday mornings. During the year three hundred and seventy-three persons attended and one active case of pulmonary tuberculosis was found.

Analysis of Survey Groups attending was as follows:

	<i>Number Examined</i>	<i>Pulmonary T.B.</i>
G.P. Referrals	135	1
Tuberculin Positive Reactors ...	38	
Contacts	3	
Contacts to Tuberculin Positive Reactors	1	
Students	14	
General Hospitals Staff	4	
Schools Staff	14	
General Public	164	
<i>Total</i>	<i>373</i>	<i>1</i>

The following abnormalities were detected:

	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
Active Tuberculosis	1		1
Tuberculosis under Observation		1	1
Tuberculosis Healed	4	4	8
Bronchitis and Emphysema	19	3	22
Non-significant Abnormalities	1	6	7
Pulmonary Infections	3	3	6
Acquired Cardio-Vascular Disease	1	3	4
Bronchial Carcinoma	2	1	3
Abnormalities of the Diaphragm and Oesophagus		1	1
Pneumoconiosis – Simple	1		1
Under Investigation			3
	<i>32</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>57</i>

Health Centre

During the year extensions were completed to the new Devon County Council Clinic in the Memorial Hospital grounds, bringing together the Local Authority services already functioning there and the General Practitioner services.

War Memorial Hospital

In the course of the year ninety-one babies were born in the Hospital:

Okehampton Borough	33
Okehampton Rural	50
Other Districts	8

Fifty-five per cent of the total births registered to the Okehampton Borough took place in the War Memorial Hospital.

SECTION 'C'

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA

Water Supply Sources

Mr. Robb, of the North Devon Water Board, has supplied the following information on his Board's progress during the year:

'Extensive work still proceeds in the Borough to restore the system to a satisfactory level.

'Several main renewals have been carried out and others are envisaged. Distribution mains have been laid to housing sites.

'The Belstone supply from Taw Marsh has been brought progressively further into the town, with the exception of Saville Mead estate the entire eastern side of the town now receives this supply.

'Satisfactory samples have been taken throughout the period.'

Rainfall

Rainfall figures for the past five years are as follows:

	<i>1966</i>	<i>1965</i>	<i>1964</i>	<i>1963</i>	<i>1962</i>
Cranmere ...	92.75	97.95	68.00	87.93	83.85
Newbridge ...	68.30	75.60	53.50	65.60	57.61
Filter Station ...	61.43	59.02	41.26	54.39	44.92
Pleasure Gardens	60.17	62.03	41.57	54.55	44.42
Dry Days (no rain)	130	178	156	164	157

The driest months were August, March and June and the wettest December, February and October. The heaviest rainfalls were recorded on 28th December (1.55 inches), 10th January (1.38 inches) and 22nd October (1.18 inches).

Sewerage

It is unfortunately again necessary to report that no progress has been made over the year towards the provision of a modern Sewage Disposal Works for the Borough. The Ministry have maintained their view that the scheme may not be proceeded with for the time being, due to restrictions on capital expenditure.

It is difficult to understand and, whatever the reason, much to be deplored that a community of almost 4,000 people should be without proper modern sewage disposal facilities.

Okehampton is a key settlement by definition and an educational, social and recreational centre by location, and it is difficult to reconcile the attitude of the Ministry in this question with the over-all desire to provide communities with modern facilities.

It is very much to be hoped that in 1967 approval will be given for this scheme to proceed and that to secure this no effort will be spared on the part of the Council.

Public Conveniences

These have again been well maintained during the year and the employment of a part-time lady cleaner/attendant at the Fairplace Gardens Ladies' Conveniences during the summer months again proved successful.

Plans are now being prepared for the provision of an additional toilet block at Market Street, and it is expected these will come into operation in the spring of 1967.

Rodent Control

Treatments of the sewer systems have again been carried out by the Council's staff in conjunction with the Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and

Food during the year. This type of treatment ensures effective control of rat infestation in the sewers, and the infestation found is now very small. During the year six complaints have been received and dealt with. In addition, advice is given to owner and occupiers of private property when requested.

Refuse Collection and Disposal

The domestic refuse collection arrangements in the Borough have been reviewed during the year and all domestic premises now receive a once-weekly collection. The provision of this basic once-weekly collection has enabled the Council's staff to provide a more efficient service while at the same time effective economies in vehicle mileages and travelling time.

The refuse tip has been satisfactorily maintained during the year, and while the problem of obtaining adequate top soil remains, it has been considerably overcome towards the end of the year, due to top soil and filling material being able to be obtained from a nearby road improvement work.

Frequent inspections are made to ensure that rat and fly infestation is kept to a minimum and the treatments of the tip carried out for rat infestation has proved most satisfactory.

Inspection of the District and Public Health Services

The number of complaints regarding public health matters received, recorded and dealt with during the year was ten.

The following table sets out the inspection carried out during the year:

	<i>Number of Inspections</i>	<i>Number of Informal Notices Served</i>	<i>Number of Informal Notices Complied With</i>
Housing	160	4	4
Drainage	30	2	2
Food Premises	52	1	1
Public Conveniences	63	—	—
Sewerage	72	—	—
Water Supply	8	—	—
Rivers	11	—	—
Refuse Disposal	121	—	—
Rodent Control	34	1	1
Removable Dwellings	10	—	—
Schools	1	—	—
Infectious Diseases	—	—	—
Petroleum Acts	19	6	5
Offices, Shops and Railway Premises Act	25	15	5
Factories	33	1	1
Miscellaneous	243	—	—
<i>Total</i>	<i>882</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>19</i>

Factories Act, 1961

Details of inspections carried out in accordance with the Factories Act, 1961, are set out in the tables which follow.

1. INSPECTIONS FOR PURPOSES OF PROVISIONS AS TO HEALTH
(including inspections made by Public Health Inspectors)

<i>Premises</i>	<i>Number on Register</i>	<i>Inspec- tions</i>	<i>Number of</i>	
			<i>Written Notices</i>	<i>Occupiers Prosecuted</i>
(i) Factories in which Sec- tions 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities	3	2	—	—
(ii) Factories not included in (i) in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority	40	25	1	—
(iii) Other premises in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority (excluding out-workers' premises)	9	6	1	—
<i>Total</i>	52	33	2	—

2. CASES IN WHICH DEFECTS WERE FOUND

Particulars	Number of cases in which defects were found				Number of cases in which prosecutions were instituted
	Found	Remedied	Referred		
			to H.M. Inspector	by H.M. Inspector	
Want of Cleanliness ...	—	—	—	—	—
Unreasonable Temperature	—	—	—	—	—
Inadequate ventilation ...	—	—	—	—	—
Ineffective drainage of floors ...	—	—	—	—	—
Sanitary Conveniences :					
(a) Insufficient	—	—	—	—	—
(b) Unsuitable or defective	3	2	—	1	—
Not separate for the sexes	—	—	—	—	—
Other offences (not including out-work)	—	—	—	—	—
Total ...	3	2	—	1	—

3. OUT-WORK (Sections 133 and 134)

<i>Nature of Work</i>	SECTION 133			SECTION 134		
	<i>Number of Out-Workers in August list required by Section 133 (1) (c)</i>	<i>Number of cases of default in sending lists to Council</i>	<i>Number of prosecutions for failure to supply lists</i>	<i>Number of instances of work in unwholesome premises</i>	<i>Notices served</i>	<i>Prosecutions</i>
Wearing Apparel. (Making, etc.)	—	—	—	—	—	—

SECTION 'D'

HOUSING

Town and Country Planning, Building Byelaws and Building Regulations

Applications for permission to develop under the Town and Country Planning Acts, Advertisement Regulations, Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act, 1960, the Council's Building Byelaws and the Building Regulations (from 1st February, 1966) have been received over the past twelve months as follows:

Alterations and Conversions	...	...	...	...	40
Advertisement Signs	...	...	...	...	4
Public Works	...	...	...	...	2
New Dwellings	...	...	...	...	14
Caravan Sites	...	...	...	...	1 (renewal)
Industrial and Shop Premises	...	...	...	...	12

Of the above, eight applications have been refused.

Private Enterprise

Twenty-one new houses were erected by private enterprise during the year.

Improvement Grants

Nine applications for Standard Improvement Grants under the provisions of the House Purchase and Housing Act, 1959, as amended by the Housing Act, 1961 and 1964, were received and approved. Of these, four have been completed during the year.

Council Housing

NEW HOUSES

During the year construction work has proceeded on the scheme for thirty-four houses, together with garages and car-parking spaces at Pike's Mead, High Street. At the end of the year good progress had been made by the consortium of local builders carrying out the work, and it is anticipated that the majority of these will be ready for occupation towards the middle of 1967.

Preparations are now under way for a further scheme to provide for seventy-five houses, together with garages and car-parking spaces, at Moyse's Meadow, High Street. With the approval of the Ministry of Housing and Local Government a tender is to be negotiated with Messrs. Selleck Nicholls Williams Ltd., and it is hoped that work on this scheme will commence in the summer or autumn of 1967.

Maintenance and Repairs

Normal maintenance and repairs have been carried out during the year and all, except electrical repairs, have been carried out by the Council's maintenance staff. No particular problems have been encountered and all repairs have been minor in character.

Repairs are carried out as speedily as possible, and during the year 220 reports were received and/or dealt with.

SECTION 'E'

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD

Food Premises

The number of food premises falling within the provisions of the Food Hygiene Regulations are as follows:

Grocers	...	...	...	...	...	...	14
Greengrocers	...	...	...	...	...	...	9
Confectioners	...	...	...	...	...	...	4
Bread and Cakes	...	...	...	...	...	...	5
Meat Shops	...	...	...	...	...	...	8
Fish Shops	...	...	...	...	...	...	3
Milk Shops	...	...	...	...	...	...	2
Dairies	...	...	...	...	...	...	3
Hotels and Bars	...	...	...	...	...	...	9
Cafés	...	...	...	...	...	...	8

Ice Cream and Preserved Foods

The number of premises registered under Section 16 of the Food and Drugs Act, 1955, is as follows:

Ice Cream	...	...	...	...	...	...	25
Preparation or Manufacture of Sausage, or Potted or Pressed, Pickled or Preserved Food intended for Sale	...	...	...	...	...	...	6

Unsound Food

Seventeen certificates for unsound food were issued during the year and 1,355 lb. of miscellaneous foodstuffs condemned.

Slaughterhouses

There are now no slaughterhouses being used in the Borough.

Slaughter of Animals Act, 1958

Applications were received for licences or renewal of licences to slaughter, and in all four cases were granted.

Food Poisoning

There were no cases notified.

SECTION 'F'

PREVALENCE OF, AND CONTROL OVER, INFECTIOUS AND OTHER DISEASES

Tuberculosis

During the year there were two new cases of pulmonry tuberculosis notified, one of whom was a readmission to the Register; one patient died; one transferred into the area; one transferred out of the area; and one patient was discharged as cured.

The Register had become out of date and I have reinvestigated each case. Therefore, at the end of the year only nine cases remain on the register, as follows:

<i>Pulmonary</i>		<i>Non-Pulmonary</i>
<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	
6	3	NIL

Figures for ten years ago (1956) show that in that typical year twenty-five cases were on the register. This points to the remarkable advances made in prevention (by vaccination, etc.), early diagnosis and treatment of tuberculosis, nowadays.

Infectious Diseases notified by Medical Practitioners

					<i>Measles</i>	
					<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
Under 1 ...	...	...	...	...	—	—
1 ...	...	...	...	...	2	1
2 ...	...	...	...	...	1	3
3 ...	...	...	...	...	2	2
4 ...	...	...	...	...	2	1
5-9 ...	...	...	...	...	14	11
10-14 ...	...	...	...	...	—	—
15-24 ...	...	...	...	...	—	—
25 ...	...	...	...	...	1	1
Age unknown ...	...	...	...	...	2	—
					—	—
					24	19
					—	—

Infectious Diseases notified by School Authorities

Ten cases of measles were notified by Okehampton County Primary School.

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In conclusion, I should like to thank the Mayor and Corporation for their consideration during this rather difficult period and Mr. Bennett for his assistance at all times and, in particular, with the compilation of the majority of Sections 'C', 'D' and 'E' in this Report.

I am, Mr. Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors,
Your obedient servant,

MARY E. BUDDING,
Medical Officer of Health.

